

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001656/24
to the Commission**

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(9 September 2024)

Subject: Pro-Hamas NGO funded by the EU

In a post on 2 August, Al Sharq Youth, the youth section of Turkish organisation Al Sharq Forum, called for a ‘final tribute’ to be paid to Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of Hamas who was killed by an Israeli airstrike on 31 July. The association even invited its followers to go to Hagia Sofia in Istanbul on Saturday 3 August to commemorate this person they call a ‘martyr’.

Numerous countries and organisations, including the European Union, consider Hamas to be a terrorist organisation.

However, the EU has heavily subsidised the Al Sharq Youth association, which is close to the Muslim Brotherhood. Between 2021 and 2023, the association received no less than EUR 100 279 in European funding for four projects.

1. What does the Commission think about an association it subsidises paying tribute to the leader of Hamas?
2. Will the Commission stop funding this association, which, by paying tribute to Haniyeh, is indirectly condoning terrorism?
3. Will the Commission ask this association to pay back the money it received in previous years?

Submitted: 9.9.2024

Answer given by Ms Ivanova on behalf of the European Commission
(28 October 2024)

In June 2024, the European Council reiterated its strongest condemnation of the brutal terrorist attacks conducted by Hamas and other terrorist groups on 7 October 2023 ⁽¹⁾.

Hamas is listed under the EU terrorist list ⁽²⁾. The EU established restrictive measures against those who support, facilitate or enable violent actions by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in January 2024 ⁽³⁾.

The organisation ‘Şark Forum Derneği’ ⁽⁴⁾ is currently not receiving any funding. In the past, it received funding (to be shared with partners) as coordinator of four projects from Erasmus+ programme for already finalised projects: EUR 85 173 in 2021 and EUR 18 755 in 2020 ⁽⁵⁾.

The Commission is politically committed and legally bound to ensure that organisations and projects involved in criminal, unethical practices or those incompatible with EU values do not receive EU financial support.

The Commission will immediately take action should it become aware of any proven evidence in this respect by excluding from EU funding entities guilty of terrorism financing or terrorism offences under the Early Detection and Exclusion System ⁽⁶⁾.

The safeguarding of the proper use of EU funds is further ensured by various mechanisms (e.g. suspension of contract or payments and contract termination) framed by the Financial Regulation ⁽⁷⁾ and relevant agreements concluded with recipients of EU funds. Entities implementing EU funds are also subject to EU restrictive measures ⁽⁸⁾.

Furthermore, the recently adopted Financial Regulation (recast) introduced specific provisions reinforcing the protection of EU values including a specific exclusion ground under the Early Detection and Exclusion System for entities that engage in activities that are contrary to the EU values.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/qa3lblga/euco-conclusions-27062024-en.pdf>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02001E0931-20240221>

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02024D0385-20240119>

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.sharqforum.org/>

⁽⁵⁾ These figures are those granted by the national agency to the entire consortium managing each project after finalisation.

⁽⁶⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/implementation/anti-fraud-measures/edes_en

⁽⁷⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast).

⁽⁸⁾ Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.